

The Canadian Field-Naturalist

Annual Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club Committee Reports for 2025

Awards Committee

The Awards Committee manages the annual process to recognize and thank those Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club (OFNC) members and other qualified persons who, by virtue of their efforts and talents, are deserving of special recognition. In late 2024, nominations were received and evaluated (see awards criteria at <https://ofnc.ca/about-ofnc/awards>), and potential recipients were recommended to the Board of Directors for approval. The awards were announced in January 2025 on the website. Biographies were written for the award recipients for inclusion in the Club's publications and posting on the website. Certificates were presented to award recipients on 12 April 2025 at the annual awards appreciation event held at City View United Church. The recipients' names, type of award, and short rationale for recognition follow below.

- Jessica Sims—Member of the Year Award, for initiating the OFNC Book Club.
- Aaron Hywaren—George McGee Service Award, in recognition of service as the Ottawa regional coordinator for the 3rd Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas.
- Janette Niwa—Mary Stuart Education Award, for outreach and education achievements for Safe Wings Ottawa, Bird Friendly Ottawa, and the OFNC.
- Ann MacKenzie—Honorary Member, for significant contributions to the successful operation of the Club over many years, particularly in the area of governance, finances, and accounting systems.

During 2024–2025, three new members joined the committee—Chris Archibald, Rita Kloosterman, and Bev McBride.

ELEANOR ZURBRIGG, Chair

Birds Committee

Administrative

- The committee lost one member towards the end of the year, but we gained one member during the year. We also had two others observe some meetings and one is interested in becoming a member of the Committee. Generally, we seem to have interest in joining, but it does not always “stick”.

- We worked on updating the Terms of Reference for the committee, to update the responsibilities to match what we do, and to add a statement about ethical birding. This is still in progress although we are very close.
- Bernie Laduceur worked on updating the Birds Records Sub-Committee (BRSC) Terms of Reference with the reduced responsibilities, in light of the eBird application which is used by many birders. Membership of BRSC reduced to two: Bernie Laduceur and Greg Zbitnew.
- We changed the “Bird Study group” to just be Bird Committee Activities.
- We also consider the Feeder Sub-Committee to be an activity of the Birds Committee as opposed to a separate subcommittee.

Activities

- The Winter Bird Feeding program was entirely cancelled. The one feeder we could have maintained was not accessible due to the state of trees on the property (trees fell and are dangerous around the feeder).
- Derek Dunnet continued to provide the Weekly Regional Birding Report, which is posted on Facebook and on our club website. He will relinquish this role to someone else after January 2026, as Derek is leaving the Birds Committee.
- Greg Zbitnew updated the Annotated List of Rare Birds and the Annotated Checklist from 2024, and the information was updated on our website. This is an annual activity.
- We maintained the Birds section of the OFNC website (Lorraine Elworthy).
- We maintained/updated the Finding 250 Birds in the Ottawa area information on Facebook and on the OFNC website.
- We met as a group and birded together in May 2025.
- The committee led bird walks in the spring at Bruce Pit (Janet McCulloch) and along the Western Ottawa parkway (Sheila Craig).
- We scheduled and organized a Bird Song ID course to be presented by Ken Allison. It will be a series of five Bird ID Zoom sessions beginning in February of 2026. This will be just in time for the spring birding season. Thanks to Janet

McCullough and Derek Dunnet for chasing this and scheduling the sessions.

- Janet McCullough continued her effort to get access to Shirley's Bay Causeway. This has been a herculean effort, which has seen Janet write letters to different levels of government in an effort to understand who owns the causeway so we can request permission to access. This effort continues but Janet has made incredible progress. We are closer than we have been in three years to getting to the bottom of this.
- SHRIKE database digitization continued. It's slow going but we have data in Excel in the right format, just waiting for upload to eBird. The work is being done by University of Ottawa students who need volunteer hours. We have many hours of work for them to help with!
- Janet McCullough prepared a presentation for the West End Learning Unlimited on birding and how to bird. This was extremely well received and the material she prepared can be used for other presentations in the future.
- Lorraine organized the bird skins tour at the Canadian Museum of Nature in the fall. This was very well attended and very much liked by everyone who attended. We expect we will organize this again.
- Bird Committee members participated in Wild Migratory Bird Day in May 2025. This was a great event, with many organizations participating. The bird walks at Mud Lake were very successful, and many people who had not been exposed to bird watching attended. This supported Bird Friendly Ottawa in their effort to get Bird Friendly Certification for Ottawa. Thanks to Pilar Bryson, Lorraine Elworthy, and Janet McCullough for their work during this event.
- We planned more activities for 2026:
 - Walk at Stratcone Park with members of the Club des ornithologues de l'Outaouais on 17 January 2026;
 - A birding travel presentation from OFNC members who have travelled to exciting places for birding;
 - Warbler walk in spring 2026;
 - Woodcock walk in spring 2026; and
 - OFNC Birds website review and update/modernization.

EMILIA MICHAUD, Chair

Conservation Committee

Through 2025, members of the Conservation Committee participated in monitoring initiatives and biodiversity surveys, launched or continued studies and research projects, and monitored events and threats

affecting local natural areas. Collectively, these activities served to further the understanding and documentation of biodiversity in the region. Below are some highlights and noteworthy events.

Support for Kingston Field Naturalists bioblitz

The Conservation Committee arranged a delegation of naturalists to participate in a BioBlitz (an intense 24-hour biodiversity survey) organized by the Kingston Field Naturalists (KFN), studying a property near Picadilly, Ontario on the Frontenac Arch. Collaborating on the KFN's annual bioblitz is becoming an annual event for the Committee, as is making the largest singular contribution to the species list. This year, the first, second, and third largest species lists collected by the KFN were each documented by OFNC Conservation Committee members.

Committee trip to Westmeath Provincial Park

Several members of the Conservation Committee joined an exploratory trip of riverine coastal habitats in Westmeath Provincial Park. Despite drought conditions that likely suppressed many species, the survey found new regional records for numerous plant species which are widely separated from the nearest known occurrences, and in some cases represent considerable extensions to the known range. These include Peachleaf Willow (*Salix amygdaloides*), Hillside Blueberry (*Vaccinium pallidum*), Three-toothed Cinquefoil (*Sibbaldopsis tridentata*), and Small Skullcap (*Scutellaria parvula*).

Also noteworthy was the extensive presence of Beach Heather (*Hudsonia tomentosa*), which was a unique component of the original Constance Bay Sand Hills, presumed extirpated locally until it was rediscovered by Conservation Committee members last year.

The Westmeath site is botanically rich with several extant plant communities which are rare to find intact, and high-quality natural features such as old-growth oaks and pines on the beach itself. Further surveys are expected to fill out our knowledge and improve documentation, as well as to follow up on some potentially significant faunal occurrences. As part of the Ottawa River system, it is very informative in terms of understanding the natural history of the region.

MacSkimming Outdoor Education Centre survey

The Conservation Committee received permission to visit the MacSkimming Outdoor Education Centre in September on a day not open to the public. The survey reinforced that this site is highly biodiverse, which was apparent despite drought conditions. Highlights included the uncommon plant American Water-pennywort (*Hydrocotyle americana*), the provincially rare Blunt-lobed Grapefern (*Sceptridium oneidense*), a species of fingernail clam in a (dry-in-September)

vernal pool (potentially *Sphaerium occidentale*), the provincially rare Lemon Cuckoo Bumblebee (*Bombus citrinus*), and new records for four of the six species of salamanders known from the site.

Western Quebec calcareous fens

Committee member Henry Robertson has been scouting and surveying locations of calcareous fens in the Outaouais (western Quebec). Calcareous fens are a fairly rare and obscure habitat which have received very little attention in the region; Henry took inspiration from an article published in *Trail & Landscape* in 1979 by former Conservation Committee member Joyce Reddoch. Several sites with extant habitat have been identified and three surveys have been conducted to date. This has led to several regionally and provincially significant botanical records, including the first Outaouais records of Autumn Willow (*Salix serissima*), Downy Willowherb (*Epilobium densum*), Few-flowered Sedge (*Carex pauciflora*), and Ranocho-rush (*Scheuchzeria palustris*). Further surveys are planned for future years.

High Falls Conservation Area surveys

Committee member Erik Pohanka conducted a baseline botanical inventory of High Falls Conservation Area, on the South Nation River in Casselman. This popular public site is located on an intriguing section of a major watershed, where substantial sections are difficult to access and survey due to private land ownership. Erik's effort involved several surveys over the course of the year. Erik also set up an iNaturalist project to help consolidate and document biodiversity data from the conservation area. Further visits are planned for next season.

Anderson Road turtle exclusion fencing

Road mortality remains a conservation concern for all terrestrial wildlife, but has very serious sustainability implications for some species, including reptiles and amphibians, and especially turtles. The City of Ottawa has several road mortality "hotspots"; the worst one is likely the combination of Roger Stevens Drive and Dwyer Hill Road in Marlborough Forest, which receives active attention from the Canadian Wildlife Federation. The worst "hotspot" inside Ottawa's urban boundary is in the Greenbelt, where Anderson Road bisects the Mer Bleue wetland complex. The National Capital Commission (NCC) has been monitoring road mortality in the Greenbelt, including on Anderson Road, and presented research on the subject to an OFNC monthly meeting a few years ago. This has been supplemented by road mortality data collected by private individuals, including members of the Conservation Committee. These data have been shared directly with the NCC, and to the *Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas*, and iNaturalist.

With the need clearly well-established, construction on turtle exclusion fencing commenced in the summer of 2025. Two of the "wetland causeway" sections of Anderson's transit of Mer Bleue will subsequently have protection. The selections of the sections were data-driven; the NCC explained to the Conservation Chair that this is intended to get the most impact from the limited budget available, and that citizen science data supported the NCC's own data in the process.

This is impactful progress and illustrates the value of citizen science, and the value of documentation that follows Conservation Committee activities.

Re-launched iNaturalist herp monitoring project

A new version of the iNaturalist project tracking reptiles and amphibians in Ottawa/eastern Ontario has been launched, taking advantage of some improved functionality in iNaturalist projects and making contributions easier. This was formally announced at the September monthly meeting.

Severe drought across region

Throughout the summer, our region received less than 40% of normal precipitation, which was exacerbated by a much higher-than-normal number of days with above average temperatures, including more than double the normal number of days with temperatures above 30°C. This meant that low rainfall was compounded by high evaporative loss. According to Agriculture Canada, a swath between Kingston and Ottawa was classified as "Extreme Drought" with the rest of the region classified as "Severe Drought". Water levels were very low in most places. The dryness of course increases fire risk, and some fires occurred in regional natural areas, including one in Alvin Runnals forest (a.k.a. The Ninth bog) and one between Lavant and Ompah (in north Frontenac County).

Ecologically, many plants sought early dormancy to avoid dying outright and fruit crops (including nuts and seeds) were aborted or reduced, affecting winter food stores for many animals. Most deciduous trees and herbaceous plants should be able to bounce back from one dry year, but would be under stress and vulnerable if next year has a similar pattern. Water depth is important for many overwintering animals to avoid freezing, so the degree to which water bodies "recharge" through the fall and early winter may affect winter mortality. These are factors to which attention must be paid in the 2026 field season.

JAKOB MUELLER, Chair

Education and Publicity Committee

The Committee has had many new members added this year. They are Min Ku, Nora Lee, Stephanie Valade, Fred Scaini, Michèle Michichiuc, and Cheryl Soullière.

The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board's Science Fair was again held live this year. Judges from the Science Fair selected four projects from a much larger group than 2024. Each were awarded \$100. Thanks to Deb Doherty, Michèle Michichiuc, and Ryan Wong who helped as judges.

Sandy Garland keeps our Friends of the Fletcher Wildlife Gardens (FWG) Facebook page up-to-date (facebook.com/groups/48901132335/). Thanks to Nina Stavlund for our OFNC Facebook page (facebook.com/groups/379992938552/).

Gord Robertson continues to update our Instagram page for the FWG/OFNC at: <https://www.instagram.com/fletcher.wildlife.garden/>. Gord is adding posts and reels (videos) regularly. The page has over 580 followers with 285 posts as of December 2025.

Our iNaturalist page continues to grow having exceeded over 1000 species, over 4000 observations, and 243 contributors. It is found at: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/fletcher-wildlife-garden>.

Gord presented to seniors at the Riverpath Retirement Ottawa and Timberwalk Retirement Home seniors' residences.

Our stories at the FWG were changed four times for each season. Several new stories were added.

We hosted one school tour, three scout/embers/guides tours, two Jane's Walks, an Indigenous group called Willow's Program, Active Jewish Adults 50+, and Canadian Association for Girls in Science.

We participated in World Migratory Bird Day, a birding event at Petrie Island, and Pollinator Appreciation Day at the FWG.

We assisted at the Junior Explorers' Day at Billings Bridge Estate with five new biographies of Canadian field naturalists and biologists and a new quest.

Cheryl Soullière with the help of Lisa Chamley created and circulated a survey for the members to volunteer for various club activities.

We continue to support Bird-Friendly Ottawa at their events and presentations with display equipment and OFNC educational and promotional materials.

GORDON ROBERTSON, Ph.D., Chair

Events Committee

From October 2024 through September 2025, the committee coordinated 58 events, including field trips, workshops, presentations for monthly meetings, and digital events. Three events that had been planned were cancelled (poor weather, etc.). The overall number of events was down slightly compared to the year prior (65 in 2023–2024). General interest and overall biodiversity (13) was the most common subject or focus, followed by birding (12), botany (11), conservation (nine), entomology (five), mycology (three), herpetology (three), and mammals (two).

A new type of event we tried this year was “mini-bioblitzes” at a couple of interesting sites that we figured could use more serious naturalist attention (Lavigne Natural Park and Carlington Woods). These events proved successful in the main mandate of gathering useful new data regarding the biodiversity of these sites, in addition to being fun and a good opportunity for the attendees to meet and interact with “experts” in the field.

Another focus we continue to work on is finding “new” interesting sites which might be relatively obscure for club events, and to effectively put these locations on our members' radar as places worth visiting. Two notable examples from this year are the Ma-te-way Recreational Trails at Renfrew and Moose Creek's “Menzies McRae and Family” Recreation Trail.

OWEN CLARKIN, Chair

Finance Committee

The committee met in person 17 March 2025, and on Zoom on 2 April, 1 May, and 26 August. Most of the discussions were through an exchange of emails.

Budget

The budget that had been developed for the fiscal year 2024–2025 was approved by the Board on 21 October 2024. In August 2025, the chairs of each committee provided their budget estimates for 2025–2026. The Finance Committee then developed a draft for consideration at the 15 September 2025 Board meeting. Each chair described their plans for the coming fiscal year. The budget was modified slightly and approved by the Board on 20 October 2025.

Insurance

The Finance Committee also reviewed a couple of insurance related issues. In January 2025, Safe Wings required a Business Procurement Number in order to get building assessment contracts with the federal government. We were advised by the insurance broker that our existing insurance policy would not cover any liability related to selling services. The cost of Errors and Omissions insurance was investigated along with the potential risks. At the same time, the possibility of getting Media Liability insurance for our publications was raised. In the report of the Finance Committee to the Board dated 19 February 2025, we described our investigation and our recommendation that extra insurance in either case was not warranted. Later in the year another insurance question was raised with respect to non-members on out-of-town trips. Again, the committee examined the issue and advised the Board that our existing coverage relates to any claims against the Club regardless of whether the complainant is a member or not.

Policies

A considerable amount of committee time was devoted to reviewing, updating and, where necessary, creating policies. With the coming into force of ONCA (*Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act*) and the subsequent adoption of the new OFNC By-Laws the previous year, it was considered advisable to ensure that policies were compatible, up-to-date, and complete.

From April to June the Board agreed to the following changes to Policies:

- Policy on Bequests—terminated.
- Policy on Conduct—revised.
- Policy on Membership—revised.
- Policy on Standing Committees—new.
- Policy on Nominations of Directors—new.
- Policy on Funding Requests outside the Budget—revised.
- Policy on Financing Out-of-Town Trips—revised.
- Policy on Investments—revised.
- Policy on Publications—revised.
- Policy on Privacy—revised.
- Policy on Remuneration—new.

The committee is still working on the Policy on Payments to Directors.

The Finance Committee is also working on a document to help members consider the vote at annual meetings regarding a financial review versus a financial audit.

ANN MACKENZIE, Chair

Fletcher Wildlife Garden Committee

This year we had seven volunteer work groups that continued our work battling invasive plants, planting native plants, and maintaining gardens, pathways, and our pond. We were excited to announce that the Fletcher iNaturalist project recorded our 1000th species that has been identified at the Garden.

The biggest challenge to our volunteers this summer was how to cope with our hot dry weather. In spite of many high heat and humidity days, volunteers were able to maintain and protect new plants even when it meant hauling water to various parts of the property.

The FWG received an unusually large number of visitors early in the New Year after word got out that owls were seen on the property. The behaviour of some birders and/or photographers raised concerns.

The Plant Sale group worked throughout the winter and into the spring. Over 80 species went on sale in May/June using an online order, prepay, schedule pickup format. This year's total sales were the highest ever, indicating an increasing interest in native plants in Ottawa's gardens.

As a way of adding more efficient tools to our tool

shed and at the same time being more environmentally friendly, we purchased battery powered hedge clippers, a saw, a whipper snipper, and a lawnmower.

This past year we participated in several activities with Carleton University. For the second year, volunteers provided expertise on an environmental issue for a class in Community Engagement. This year, the focus was invasive plants. Community Associations for Environmental Sustainability (CAFES) recruits community associations to work with a team of students to raise awareness among their neighbours. Several Fletcher volunteers also participated in a survey by geography students who were interested in how these volunteers see their role in the community.

Work continued on invasive aquatic plants in the amphibian pond, replanting of the southern bank of the pond, and the gully. Over 200 species can now be found in the gully. Encouraging progress is being made in the battle against Dog-strangling Vine (DSV), as several native plants including Snakeroot, Virginia Creeper, goldenrod, and Jewelweed, have moved into parts of the garden that have been cleared of DSV. Purple Comfrey, which has been very aggressive in many parts of the property including along the road into the Fletcher, was the target of many volunteers.

The FWG hosted a Jane's Walk again in early May. Other tours were given to such groups as the Canadian Federation of University Women, cubs and sparks, and several school classes. Our Medicine Garden (shkagamik) was a popular stop for many of our visitors.

Our lease with Agriculture and Agri-food Canada was renewed for a five-year period.

EDWARD (TED) FARNWORTH,
Representative to the Board

Macoun Club Committee

The Macoun Field Club is for children and young people (ages eight to 19). Activities all took place on Saturdays during the school year, with 2-hour-long indoor meetings one week alternating with 4- or 5-hour-long field trips the next.

Committee members led 14 field trips to places long familiar to leaders and members (the Club's nature study area in the western Greenbelt, a fossil locality near the Macoun Marsh at Beechwood Cemetery, and extensive private and Crown lands in Lanark County), and conducted 14 indoor meetings with a wide range of presentations and workshops at the FWG's resource centre. A field trip directed by experts from the Ottawa Mycology group in the Club's study area was especially popular and spurred new interest in fungi among several Macoun members.

Membership increased to 30, from 25 last year.

An account of events was regularly posted on the Macoun Club's home page.

At the end of the Macoun Club year, Issue No. 77 of *The Little Bear* was produced.

ROBERT E. LEE, Chair

Membership Committee

This report describes club membership as of 30 September 2025 (Table 1). Club participation is divided into two groups. "Members" consists of those who pay club fees, are "Honorary" members, or participate in Macoun Club. This group could be considered people who might participate in events. The other group, "Associates", consists of those who receive *Trail & Landscape* (T&L) only: "T&L Subscribers" and an aggregate called "Other" which represents individuals and organizations who receive complimentary copies of T&L.

The total number of members has stayed stable in the mid-800s range for the past several years. In 2025 the number of Family memberships is slightly down while the number of Individual is up. This seems to be due to some families switching to individual and to a number of new individuals joining. Members within 50 km of Ottawa comprised 737 (87%) of the Canadian membership of 845.

TABLE 1. Summary of Membership Count, displayed by membership type.

Type		2025	2024
Canadian Members	Individual	441	401
	Family	312	327
	Student	11	17
	Life	34	34
	Honorary	23	23
	Macoun Club	15	23
Total Canadian Members		836	825
United States	(All six types)	8	8
International	(All six types)	1	3
Total Members		845	836
	T&L Subscriber	1	3
	Other	25	24
Total Associates		26	27

Note about the method: The Membership Report is created using a membership database current as of midnight, 30 September (including, if applicable, cheques dated before this but received shortly after this). Macoun Club counts the number of households participating (which may include >1 child), as of the previous October. Member counts in this report will differ from payment counts in the annual liability report, as there is a lag between a member's non-payment and deactivation.

Membership distribution

The Club currently has members in all provinces and territories except New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Nunavut (Table 2). The vast majority are in Ontario and within 50 km of Ottawa, but quite a few are outside that range in Ontario.

TABLE 2. Summary of Member Count, displayed by location. Includes the six Member types.

Location	2025	2024
Ontario (<50 km)	708	704
Quebec (<50 km)	29	27
Alberta	9	8
British Columbia	12	11
Manitoba	2	1
New Brunswick	0	2
Newfoundland	0	0
North West Territories	1	1
Nova Scotia	3	3
Nunavut	0	0
Ontario (>50 km)	61	56
Prince Edward Island	2	1
Quebec (>50 km)	6	8
Saskatchewan	1	1
Yukon	2	2
United States	8	8
Other Countries	1	3
Total	845	836

LISA CHAMNEY, Chair

Publications Committee

The Publications Committee manages publication of CFN, T&L, and Special Publications. We published four issues of T&L (58[4] and 59[1–3]) and four issues of CFN: 137(4), published on 23 October 2024; 138(1), 17 January 2025; 138(2), 26 March 2025; and 138(3), 29 May 2025. Addressing the financial sustainability and other operational challenges of CFN was a major focus of the committee in 2025.

JEFFERY M. SAARELA, Chair

Safe Wings Ottawa

Safe Wings Ottawa (SWO) continues its work monitoring bird-glass collision, rehabilitating the injured birds, educating the public about the issue, and filling the gaps in Ottawa for rescuing injured birds and caring for injured and orphaned Mallard ducklings and Canada Goose goslings.

Patrolling and Rehabilitation

At the time of reporting, our volunteers have documented nearly 1800 window collisions and we expect this number will be close to 2000 when all

data entry is completed and confirmed for the calendar year 2025. Our estimates are that we only find 1% of bird collisions in Ottawa due to volunteer availability and the number of buildings we can monitor. We are thankful to have so much support from the public who follow us on social media and spread the word.

Species-at-risk recorded by SWO in 2025 include (window collision deaths and rehab):

- Barn Swallow 1 specimen
- Wood Thrush 3 specimens
- Rusty Blackbird 1 specimen

Safe Wings has bird species and/or counts that may surprise people, which as of reporting time in 2025 includes:

- Brown Creeper 43 specimens
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird 29 specimens
- Ovenbird 22 specimens
- Indigo Bunting 6 specimens*
- Ruffed Grouse 4 specimens
- Black-billed Cuckoo 4 specimens
- American Woodcock 3 specimens*
- Winter Wren 2 specimens
- Barred Owl 2 specimens
- Black-backed Woodpecker 1 specimen*
- Northern Shrike 1 specimen
- Cooper's Hawk 1 specimen
- Broad-winged Hawk 1 specimen*
- Merlin 1 specimen

A Black-backed Woodpecker (Figure 1) died in 2025 after colliding with a window in Ottawa. While photos like this upset some individuals, it is important to share the reality of the impact our built environment has on wildlife and, for Safe Wings, specifically birds. Seeing the outcome of highly reflective and/or transparent glass has a strong impact and educational value.

The highest glass collision species in 2025 are (numbers to be confirmed for January reporting as required for permits):

- Dark-eyed Junco 125 specimens
- Black-capped Chickadee 111 specimens
- Tennessee Warbler 108 specimens
- White-throated Sparrow 107 specimens
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 58 specimens

*Currently there are 4338, 2158, 616, and 3501 eBird Ottawa observations for Indigo Bunting, American Woodcock, Black-backed Woodpecker, and Broad-winged Hawk, respectively. Not all individual birds in the area are sighted and entered into eBird and some enthusiasts only enter rare or uncommon birds. To offer a comparison for the numbers above, Black-capped Chickadee has over 17.1 million observations on eBird for Ottawa!



FIGURE 1. Black-backed Woodpecker. Photo: Safe Wings volunteer monitoring buildings.

Our rehabilitation centre was busy, admitting 279 birds this year. Of those, 147 were window impacts, 14 impacts with other objects such as cars, and 34 nest-falls or orphaned baby birds (excluding the Mallard ducklings). This is down from 2024 due to a need to close our volunteer-run rehab for several months over the summer. The top four species were:

- Dark-eyed Junco 17 birds
- Tennessee Warbler 16 birds
- Black-capped Chickadee 11 birds
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 9 birds

Our rehab also saw high numbers of European Starling hatchlings and nestlings and Rock Pigeon babies and adults with string foot (string or garbage wrapped around their leg).

Safe Wings successfully rehabilitated a Rusty Blackbird (Figure 2)—stunning up close! This species has been assessed as Special Concern by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) and is listed as such under the Canadian *Species at Risk Act*. Safe Wings successfully rehabilitated and released this beautiful bird after seven days!

A nestling Barn Swallow (Figure 3) was rescued and brought to Safe Wings. It was treated for worms and after eight days, we arranged a ride to a specialized



FIGURE 2. Rusty Blackbird. Photo: Safe Wings Ottawa.



FIGURE 4. Bald Eagle. Photo: Safe Wings Ottawa.



FIGURE 3. Barn Swallow. Photo: Safe Wings Ottawa.



FIGURE 5. Ruffed Grouse. Photo: Safe Wings Ottawa.

nesting rehabber with other Barn Swallows in care. This swallow was successfully raised and released!

A Bald Eagle (Figure 4) was found in the Calabogie area on the ground and unable to fly. Safe Wings connect with the public via social media, and a rescuer brought the raptor in for emergency rehab prior to transport to The Owl Foundation for x-rays and assessment. Unfortunately, the eagle, named Charlie by the rescuer's son, had too much damage with broken and splintered bones for rehabilitation to be possible. A team of wonderful people gave this magnificent bird the best shot possible, but sometimes that is not enough to save a feathered life.

A Ruffed Grouse is a rare admission for Safe Wings! Our last one was March 2022. Early in 2025 a Ruffed Grouse (Figure 5) was seen colliding into a window by one of our volunteers. They were able to rescue the bird immediately and get it into care. eBird calls them a “well-camouflaged chickenlike bird. Intricately patterned plumage varies from cold gray to

rich reddish-brown”. Many people have not seen one in person and the size and markings often make them confused as raptors of some type.

Another unusual rescue that made it into Safe Wings was a male Common Merganser (Figure 6). While it was a collision victim, the accident was with Ottawa's light rail train, the O-train. A rescuer was found and brought the bird into Safe Wings for some immediate care. Then we found a ride for this amazing bird to get it specialized care.

A Yellow Warbler (Figure 7) was our first warbler needing rehab in the fall season this year. You can see the distinctive closed eye found in many, if not most window collision victims. In addition to bruising and possible broken bones, most birds that fly into glass end up with a concussion.

We had our second over-wintering bird this year—an Ovenbird was admitted 10 October 2024, and was not well enough to be released for the fall migration. The bird was kept for 208 days and then released in



FIGURE 6. Common Merganser. Photo: Safe Wings Ottawa.



FIGURE 7. Yellow Warbler. Photo: Safe Wings Ottawa.

Ottawa on 5 May 2025, when other Ovenbirds were again in the city.

Our window collision recovery rates continue to surpass reported averages, and we continue to refine our protocols through ongoing collaboration with rehabilitation facilities across North America. While we hope that one day specialized rehab centres like SWO will no longer be needed, we take pride in knowing we are making a real difference for the birds affected by window collisions!

Rescue

As you can see from these examples, Safe Wings rescues and treats more than window collision victims, although they are our *raison d'être*. With volunteers and the public willing to rescue and drive birds, along with our after-hours availability, we are a go-to resource in Ottawa, even while being entirely volunteer run! The Bald Eagle (Figure 4), Charlie, shows just how important our community is. Some people contacted Safe Wings for help, we reached out to and mobilized the public via social media, a local contact volunteered to rescue and capture the eagle (their first eagle ever!), and they and another party drove

the injured bird to Safe Wings in Orleans. Then Safe Wings cared for the bird while trying to arrange a flight with Canadian Wings of Rescue; however, the weather did not support these efforts. A volunteer drove the bird to The Owl Foundation near Niagara Falls for the final assessment. We also have some skilled kayakers willing to brave sometimes cold water to help with goose and duck rescues! No one can do this alone—so we thank all our volunteers, fellow rehabbers and organizations, and the caring public.

Safe Wings volunteers rescue many injured geese and ducks—whether after being hit by a car or bike, shot, or incapacitated by an injury, wires, or fishing line. It has been a very busy year for these types of calls. Since the end of July, we have responded to well over 100 calls directed to us from the Ottawa Valley Wild Bird Care Centre (OVWBCC) and our volunteers followed up on at least 80 of those calls. These are two we rescued from fishing line and hooks at Mooney’s Bay (Figure 8).

Got your attention with this cute fluff (Figure 9), didn’t we? For the fourth year in a row, SWO has continued helping orphaned geese and ducklings in the Ottawa region. The OVWBCC continues to take in Wood and other ducklings again in 2025, so we again stepped in to rescue and raise in the range of 65 to 75



FIGURE 8. Two rescues from Mooney’s Bay. Photos: Safe Wings Ottawa.



FIGURE 9. Wood Duck duckling. Photo: Safe Wings Ottawa.

orphaned Mallard ducklings and around 20 Canada Geese. We partnered again this year with an incredible foster who provided the ideal environment for these young birds throughout their stay with us. While we look forward to the OVWBCC potentially taking on Mallards in the future, we will continue to fill this vital gap as long as our resources allow.

Safe Wings was contacted when a Killdeer was found nesting at a construction site out in Orleans (Figure 10). Our rehabber went out herself to find the bird, which is very well camouflaged in the rocks and dirt. The construction developer then set-up protection to ensure she and her eggs were safe until they hatched. Does everyone remember the BluesFest Killdeer? Same situation here—you are not allowed to disturb or destroy most active bird nests or eggs. This includes American Robins, Canada Geese, and other more common birds.

Other rescues this year include a mother duck and ducklings from Algonquin College, rescue of ducklings from backyard in-ground pools (Mallards nest

in yards because it's safe and ducklings cannot get out of pools—a FrogLog, <https://froglog.us/>, or home-made ramp is needed), ducklings and goslings from the Ottawa canal locks (the babies jump in but cannot get out so they drown and die), and more.

A Safe Wings volunteer used a kayak to rescue a domestic duck (Figure 11) which should not have been released into the wild. A good home was found for this guy and he even has some girlfriends now.

Safe Wings will continue to step in to these situations where and when we have capacity.

Outreach

Another year, another annual display, this year with a theme of “Across Canada”, including attendance and birds from similar organizations in Toronto and London, Ontario and support from Bird Friendly Ottawa. This Safe Wings’ event (Figure 12) was again graciously hosted by the Museum of Nature on the Thursday of spring-break week in March, again taking advantage of free evening access to the museum. We expanded the information shared with the public by including more side tables focussing on individual species.

Our volunteers participated in seven public engagements this year:

- Bird Friendly Ottawa’s “World Migratory Bird Day” event at the Ron Kolbus Centre at Andrew at Britannia Park and Beach.
- Earth Day Event with Councillor Riley Brockington in the River Ward.
- The Cumberland Museum’s “Animal Helper Day”.
- Bird Walk tours with Convent Glen and Bird Friendly Ottawa at Petrie Island.
- A presentation to the Constitutions Square Management team regarding birds and glass window collisions.



FIGURE 10. A Killdeer and construction site. Photos: Safe Wings Ottawa.



FIGURE 11. Domestic duck. Photo: Safe Wings volunteer.

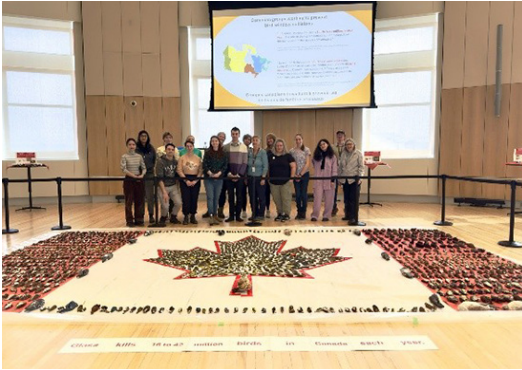


FIGURE 12. Annual display at the Canadian Museum of Nature, March 2025. Photos: Safe Wings Ottawa volunteer Nui Soonthut Esser.

Safe Wings was the contact for multiple media interviews with the *Ottawa Citizen*, CTV, CFRA, and Carleton University journalism students. Topics included our annual display, geese nesting on roofs, bird wires at Britannia Beech ensnaring birds, birding in general, and the rescue of the Bald Eagle, Charlie.

Advocacy

Safe Wings continued with advocacy work throughout 2025. This includes continued pushing for new buildings to be bird friendly and existing buildings to be retrofitted. It also includes working with Parks Canada to push for rafts to be placed in the locks of the Rideau Canal to save goslings and ducklings which cannot fly out on their own—Safe Wings even provided a number of rafts and ropes.

Safe Wings continues to work with similar organizations, providing data on collisions. The information is used to ensure that buildings are meeting the requirements of the Migratory Bird Regulations. Enforcement has been conducted in a few isolated situations, including one private individual fine for throwing things at a goose, as reported by the CBC: “Winnipegger’s \$300 fine for throwing things at Canada goose a rare case but a good reminder, lawyer says” (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-goose-fine-migratory-birds-act-1.7600025>). Given this and a couple other small-scale examples, Safe Wings and similar organizations intend to conduct stronger follow-up on this issue.

One building was successfully treated on one side in downtown Ottawa late in 2024. The building at 200 Kent Street, which houses federal government workers, had Feather Friendly treatment finished to nine stories on its south side. When one treated window was replaced with a clear glass window, Safe Wings’ volunteers found dead birds right under that location, providing further evidence of the effectiveness of treated windows compared to the danger of those



left untreated.

Unfortunately, the City of Ottawa has still not adopted the proposed High Performance Development Standards, which would include mandatory bird friendly design. We will continue to advocate for support, despite council’s delayed vote and reticence due to current provincial direction on conservation issues and construction.

Another organisation we continue to work with is Carleton University. Professor Rachel Buxton’s students continued work on window collision research and carcass persistence (how long dead bird carcasses remain at a site). Their data and research on collisions in Ottawa include support on data collation and mapping. Carleton University continues to treat building windows and campus, and a group of students created a mural to help birds see a section of glass (Figure 13). We hope more students engage in bird friendly design and lead the way for the next generations.

JANETTE NIWA, Chair



FIGURE 13. Window treatments at Carleton University help birds see glass and prevent window collisions. Photo: Safe Wings volunteer.

Treasurer's Report 2024–2025

Financial Status

The Club ended the 2024–2025 fiscal year (1 October 2024 through 30 September 2025) in a good position. Our assets declined slightly, to \$1 580 597. Our net revenue this year was \$2054.

Some points to note about this year's results:

- Four issues of CFN were published, compared with three last year. That resulted in a corresponding increase to CFN expenses.
- We increased our ongoing support for buses to the MacSkimming Outdoor Education Centre, from \$5000 to \$7000. The Centre is a program of the Ottawa–Carleton District School Board that provides education about natural history. Our support enables elementary students to participate.
- We made a \$5000 donation to the Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust to support a land purchase.
- A major fundraising program, the native plant sale, is run by the volunteers of the Fletcher Wildlife Garden. Once again plant sale revenue increased, to \$19981.

The budget for the Club is attached to the minutes of the October meeting of the Board of Directors, available on the OFNC website at ofnc.ca/about-ofnc/minutes-of-the-board.

Financial Statements

The members of the Club are provided with the financial statements of the Club prior to the meeting, and a motion to approve them is made at the Annual Business Meeting (ABM). The financial statements have been prepared by our accounting firm, Welch LLP. They have conducted an engagement review of our financial records.

The financial statements comprise three tables.

The **Statement of Financial Position**, on page 2 presents the assets and liabilities of the Club as a whole. This statement is similar to the balance sheet of a for-profit business. It is a snapshot of our assets and liabilities at the end of the financial year.

At the end of the year, we had Assets of \$1 580 597. That is a lot of money for a field naturalist club in Ontario.

To see what we did with our assets, we can look at the **Statement of Operations** on page 3. It is similar to the profit & loss statement of a for-profit business. It shows the revenues and expenses of the club—money coming in and money going out. The presentation of this information has changed. In previous financial statements, this information was spread out

across three separate tables. That made it difficult to see the overall picture. Now there is a single page with everything on it.

The column on the left lists the various categories of revenues and expenses. Revenues are fairly simple. There are a small number of categories, each of a significant size—membership fees, donations and bequests, CFN revenues, the FWG native plant sale, and interest.

Expenses are more diverse. The itemized categories range in size from \$48 spent by the Awards Committee to \$72 661 spent on CFN. And there are many more categories of expense than revenue.

Our major expenses are for publications, running the FWG, SWO, and operating expenses.

Expenses are broken down into Operating and Activity. Operating expenses are the administrative ones. It summons a mental image of OFNC staff sitting around eating doughnuts. In fact, the OFNC doesn't have any staff. Operating expenses consist almost entirely of fees that we pay for bookkeeping, accounting, insurance, and financial services. They account for 86% of operating expenses. We don't have any choice but to purchase these services. They are to a large extent a function of the size of our assets.

The columns show those categories for each of the Club's funds. The funds categorize some of the Club's activities, such as the FWG.

The third table is a **Statement of Cash Flows** (page 4). It distinguishes between the amounts involved in our day-to-day operations from those involved in investing our assets. Unlike the other two statements, it is based on cash rather than accrual accounting, so some of the numbers for similar categories differ among the statements.

The *Notes to the Financial Statements* (page 5) explain the Club's financial policies and include some additional details about our long-term investments.

On a related note, our investments are made according to a policy established by the Board of Directors. The policy is implemented by our Investment Manager and our Investment Advisor, Sue Anderson of BMO Nesbitt-Burns.

As in the past, we have received excellent service from our accounting firm, Welch LLP and our bookkeeper, Katryna Colless, of Plus Advisors.

I would like to express my appreciation for the assistance that I have received from Ann MacKenzie and the Finance Committee.

KEN YOUNG, Treasurer

Approved financial statements available online at: <https://www.canadianfieldnaturalist.ca/index.php/cfn/article/view/3696/3467>